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may have expected this within his own life time, or he may not. His picture of the Messiah here as he looked forward was far different from ours. There was little of the spiritual in his. It served for little more than a type, just as was the old warrior King David. Isaiah saw one perfectly fulfilling the ordinary duties of an earthly monarch, and for this crowned and exalted with his four names. Isaiah saw salvation wrought in deliverance from temporal foes. His vision was circumscribed. Only in the ethical and eternal character of the Messiah's kingdom is it identical with ours. He stood upon Old Testament ground. He had not entered into the promises.

THE EXTERNAL FORM OF THE QURAN.

By Rev. Professor CHARLES HORSWELL,

Evanston, Ill.

In size the Quran is much larger than the New Testament, but it contains only about four-fifths as much material. The ordinary edition presents a very striking and beautiful page; a distinctness of type that is exquisite. As one opens the book for the first time, there seems to be reflected from it something of that mystic reverence with which it has been hallowed by the Muslims. On the title page we read "The Quran; and it leads in the right way and teaches discrimination." The book is divided into 114 chapters, called *suras*. These *suras* are of very unequal length, some containing twenty-five words, others twenty-five pages. Chapters two to nine, inclusive, contain one-third of the book. The chapters are again divided into verses of unequal length. There is another division by which the Quran is apportioned for public reading, either into sixty or thirty equal parts, each part assigned to a

reader, so that the whole book may be read through every day. These last divisions are marked in small type on the margin.

The superscription of each sura consists of three parts. First, the title proper; second, the statement as to where it was revealed, i. e. at Mecca or Medina, with the number of the verses; third, the "Bismillah."

The title proper, which is the first line of the superscription, represents a particular matter treated of, or person mentioned—very often some prominent word. The matter referred to in this title may be in the beginning of the sura, or near the middle, or at the end. In the shorter suras the subject-matter clusters readily enough about some important word or phrase; also in the longer suras, if there is unity of thought or a connected story. But there are many cases where the title stands for the merest fragment of the sura, and has not the remotest connection with the rest of it. For example, the title of the second sura refers to about four verses out of 285. Sura ten, called "Jonah," might as well have received half a dozen other titles, for not more than a fifth of its material—and that the very last in the sura—has any connection whatever with Jonah.

To read, in succession, these so-called titles, gives little or no idea of what the chapters contain—"The Cow, The Table, The Spider, Abraham, The Night-Journey, The Greeks, The Striking, The Creator, The Resurrection, The Wrapped-Up, Abu Laheb, The Afternoon, The Elephant, Declaration of God's Unity."

What evidence is there that these titles were the work of Muhammed? *First*—The editorial work of the Quran furnishes manifold proof of the superstitious reverence of the compilers. There is little probability that *they* added them. *Second*—In the MSS. copies neither the chapters nor the verses are numbered. As the constant use of the suras in public worship required some means of reference, there must have been some way of distinguishing them. *Third*—Some of the suras Muhammed mentions by their titles—e. g., at the battle of Honein he addressed a company of his followers as "The men of the sura Bacr."

The second line of the superscription states whether the sura was revealed at Mecca or Medina. In some cases we find part of it belonging to Mecca and part to Medina. If this matter be in dispute, it is so stated. In the MSS., verses are not numbered. The reason for this is evident. The chief disagreement between the several editions of the Quran consists in the division and number of the verses. Some editions have only 6,000 verses, one as high as 6,236.

The third line of the superscription, found everywhere, except in the ninth sura, is the "Bismillah"—"In the Name of the Most Merciful God." This is a peculiar mark, used everywhere as the distinguishing characteristic of their religion, it being counted a sort of impiety to omit it.

Prefixed to twenty-nine chapters of the Quran are certain letters of the alphabet, sometimes one letter, sometimes two, sometimes three, and in one case five. A. L. M. is the most common combination. Many ingenious conjectures have been made as to their import: (1) That they stand for the words "*Amar li Muhammed*," meaning "At the command of Muhammed;" (2) for Allah, Gabriel and Muhammed; (3) numerically, the letters represent seventy-one. Some drew from this the conclusion that in seventy-one years the Muslim faith would be universal. There is one observation of more special note, that, in cases where these letters occur, there is reference, in the opening lines of the sura, to the "revelation" or "handing down." Only two suras that have the letters begin differently, and only four suras that begin in this way lack the letters. Muhammed may have meant these letters as a mystic reference to the original text, in heaven. (Commentators generally agree that no one but God knows their meaning.)

The suras are placed in the Quran to-day just as they were arranged by Zeid in his first collection. There is an utter lack of sequence, logical or chronological. The initial or opening prayer stands first. After this there seems to be an effort to arrange the suras according to their length; the longest first. But even this is not strictly adhered to. We can scarcely think that the present arrangement received any sanction from Muhammed. On the other hand, there is

every evidence to prove that if there had been any fixed order for the material while the prophet lived, the compilers would have scrupulously followed it. The present disorder must be attributed to the condition of the material from which the collection was made, and to the false zeal of the compiler, which left the Quran a chaotic jumble. We find in it a portion produced at Medina immediately preceding a passage revealed long before at Mecca; a command placed directly after a later one which cancels or modifies it; an argument suddenly disturbed by the introduction of a sentence foreign to its purport. The fact that some of the suras are so short, naturally suggests that the longer ones may be compilations, especially since short passages were often given out in dribblets, and even single verses, as occasion required. There is a tradition to the effect that Muhammed used to direct his amanuensis to enter *this material* in the sura which treated of such and such a subject.

To show that these statements as to arrangement are not exaggerations, and that we may appreciate the painstaking patience by which critics have obtained their results in the last twenty-five years, let me quote from an earnest advocate of Muhammed, writing in 1840. Abuse of Muhammed put Carlyle in the mood to defend the prophet's character. In doing this he was necessarily led to say something about the book. There is no doubt about Carlyle's intentions. He distinctly asserts, "I mean to say all the good of him I justly can," but "I must say the Quran is as toilsome reading as I ever undertook. A wearisome, confused jumble, crude, incondite, endless iterations, long-windedness, entanglement, *most* crude, incondite. Insupportable stupidity in short. Nothing but a sense of duty could carry any European through the Quran. We read in it—as we might in the state paper-office—unreadable masses of lumber, that perhaps we may get some glimpses of a remarkable man."

Since the Quran is the chief source of information, both for Muhammed and the Muslim religion, and only as we read it aright can we interpret the life of Muhammed and the faith of his followers, it is clear that the importance of a critical arrangement cannot be over-estimated. The problem

is not a simple one, and the results obtained vary. Three methods have been employed. First, the Muslim compiler, with Pharisaic reverence, "performing his ablutions every time he approached his task, daring only to put the sacred fragments in juxtaposition; leaving legend, doctrine, prophecy in one interminable mass, told over and over again with little verbal variation;" not venturing to select from repeated versions of the same incident, nor to reconcile differences, nor to connect abrupt transitions of context by the alteration of a single letter. This is the form of the Quran as it comes to the English reader in the ordinary translation. Over against this method of dealing with the material, is the school of criticism that regards the *entire* Quran as a piece of patchwork, that overlooks the characteristics of the Semitic mind and attempts to square the book by standards foreign to the literature. Nöldeke confesses that he has carried this style of criticism too far, and Wellhausen thinks Sprenger has done the same.

Between these extreme views is another that is satisfied with drawing a somewhat distinct line between the Mecca and Medina Suras, corresponding to the radical change experienced in the life of the author. Since the Medina suras are colored by events fairly well known, the dates of the separate suras are obtained with some degree of accuracy. The Mecca suras present greater difficulties. Prof. Weil has classified them into three groups. The short suras are the oldest. They are farthest removed in style from the Medina passages, and form a distinct group. It is not difficult to form another cluster of the *later* Meccan suras, that show marked affinity with those of Medina. Between these two groups stand a number of suras which bear the marks of transition from the first to the third. These groups cannot be separated by sharp lines, and within any group it is altogether impossible to determine even a probable chronological order.

We have only to speak of style so far as it affects the *form*. Muhammed declined to be rated as a poet. No one of the fifty-five titles of the Quran indicate that it is poetry. The variety of the material demanded a similar variety in the

method of treatment. A prose style would well suit much of the matter in the Quran. But Muhammed adopted a rhymed prose, which could well express the more poetic sections, but imposes on the Quran, as a whole, a very burdensome yoke. There is a persistent effort to give to the terminations of verses similar sounds. In the second sura, which is the longest, the majority of verses end with the syllable "*un*" or "*in*." In sura thirty-five there is the same effort to use the letter "*r*" at the close. The combination may differ, and the uniformity with which it is carried out, but the effort is quite generally manifest. This has made the style stiff and unnatural, since it has dominated both the order and the choice of words. It has also caused abruptness by the introduction of irrelevant matter and led to endless repetition of familiar phrases, such as "the powerful," "the wise," "the merciful," "the compassionate." It has also given different forms to the same word. In sura 69, verse 17, there can be little doubt but that the choice of the numeral eight is determined by sound and not by fact. As the number refers to the angels that bear the throne of God, it manifests the extreme influence of the rhyme. In some cases we find not only a recurring syllable, but a recurring sentence. In sura 55 the words, "Which, therefore, of your Lord's benefits will ye ungratefully deny," are repeated thirty-one times. The facts, too, that so many sentences begin with "On a day when," where the connection is invisible; that in sura 18 the words "till that" occur eight times as a conjunction in close succession; go to prove that Muhammed was not a master of style.

A comparative study of the external forms of the Quran and the Bible suggests some parallels that are of interest.

(1) In the Quran God is represented as speaking in a more direct form, if possible, than in the Bible. It is dominated from first to last by a "Thus saith the Lord."

(2) The text of the Quran has been preserved with the greatest care. To countenance a various reading is by a Muslim regarded as an offense against the state. "No other work" (says Muir) "has remained for twelve centuries with so pure a text."

(3) Not only have the words and letters of the Quran been counted, but pains have been taken to compute the number of times each letter of the alphabet occurs.

(4) On the matter of vowel points it is worthy of notice that the texts were pointed about the same time, and for the same purpose, i. e. to preserve a standard text. In each case they were soon regarded by many as an original element of the book. In each case there has been a fierce and prolonged contest as to the origin of every minutia of the text. By the Muslims the question of whether the Quran was uncreated and eternal was controverted with so much heat "that it occasioned many calamities under some of the Caliphs," making necessary a public edict, declaring the Quran to be created, and that those who held the contrary opinion should be whipped, imprisoned and put to death. On the other hand, Christian theologians in Switzerland in 1678 enacted a law that no person should be licensed to preach unless he publicly declared that he believed in the divinity of the Hebrew vowel points and accents.

(5) Under the head of superscriptions there is first in the case of the Quran and the Bible the question of their genuineness; second their relation to the subject-matter. What has been said in regard to the inaptness of the titles of the Quran has its parallel in the bere'shith of Genesis, the shemôth of Exodus, the wayyiqra' of Leviticus, the bemidhbar of Numbers, and the debharim of Deuteronomy. The title "Samuel," as applied to the first two books of the Kings and the fanciful divisions of the cxix. Psalm, are further examples.

(6) With the mysterious letters of the Quran may be compared the Majuscular and Minuscular letters of the Massorites. Concerning their interpretation it is interesting to know that a Mr. W. H. Black, F. S. A., in a paper read before the Chronological Society of London, October 4th, 1864, propounded the theory that the sum total of the Majuscular letters is designed to give the date of the Pentateuch.

(7) Aside from the parallel divisions of chapter and verse, the Quran and the Bible are divided for systematic reading in public service.

(8) Attention has been called to the lack of arrangement

in the Quran. There is abundant evidence that some of the material now combined existed at an earlier time in separate form. This suggests at once the question of the analysis of the Pentateuch, and of a first and second Isaiah.

(9) Several fragments of the Quran are preserved as genuine that are not in the text, so that the question of the *canon* finds its parallel.

(10) The necessity of a careful study of the historic background is ever present in the Quran, as in the Bible, in the scientific interpretation of the material.

(11) The absence of historical data, in both books, is most worthy of notice. Muhammed's name occurs but five times in the Quran, and only two contemporaries are mentioned. If we put beside this the statement from the lips of Ali, "There is not a verse in the Quran of which I do not know the matter, the parties to whom it refers, and the place and time of its revelation, whether by night or by day, whether in the plains or upon the mountain," and keep in mind at the same time the immense activity and the many personal encounters of the prophet's life, we are led to wonder at the suppression of historic detail, as we wonder at a similar absence of historical data in the songs of Deborah and Hannah, in the Psalter and the book of Job.